

Beetz  
(Ga BIT)

Q-6581

SCI DETACHMENT  
BERLIN

27 August 1945

SUBJECT: New Information on the ROTE KAPELLE Organization of 1942

TO : Chief, SCI, Germany

INTRODUCTION:

Preliminary questioning of Frau Hildegard BEETZ in Weimar in June 1945 brought to light the existence, in the summer of 1942, of a high-level Russian espionage ring in Berlin known as the "Rote Kapelle". Frau Beetz had heard of this ring while in Rome through an RSHA man sent there to find out whether a certain man in the German Embassy had been in some way involved. According to Frau Beetz, the ring involved a high official of the Economics Ministry, a high official of the Foreign Office and one of Gen. Milch's aides in the Air Ministry. A Russian radio man provided communications with Moscow; and the ring was smashed by the capture and turning around of this man by the RSHA. Frau Beetz was turned over to the 12th A.G. Interrogation Center with the recommendation that she be further questioned about the Rote Kapelle, among other matters. What developed there is not known to the writer, but the following additional details have now been obtained in Berlin from an SCI informant.

1. Informant was working in the Foreign Office in the summer of 1942 (probably August) when Legationsrat 1. Klasse Rudolf von Scheliha was summoned to the Personnel Section and arrested. Also arrested from the Foreign Office were Dr. Karl Helfrich and a former woman journalist, Ilse Stobe.

2. Frau von Scheliha was arrested and released: she went to the Czechoslovakian estate of her brother (name resembles Von Megendorf) and is probably still there. A sister of Von Scheliha's is in Switzerland.

3. Arrested at the same time as Von Scheliha were Oberregierungsrat Hannecken, of the Wirtschaftsministerium, and Frau Hannecken: an Oberleutnant in the Luftfahrtministerium; and at least one, and more probably two, colonels -- either of the Air Ministry or of the OKW. These are the arrests known to informant. He subsequently found out, however, that more than 100 persons were involved.

4. Great efforts to maintain secrecy were made by the RSHA. The official story in the Foreign Office was always that those arrested were on a journey, and conversation about their absence was forbidden.

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5. Informant was in a position to find out about the story in considerable detail. This came about through his friendship with Generalrichter (Judge Advocate General) of the Luftwaffe Koepsch. This man was the chief of Generalrichter of the Luftwaffe Roeder, entrusted by the German authorities with the prosecution of the military personnel involved in the affair.

6. Informant learned that those arrested were members of the Rote Kapelle, an espionage ring. (Whether this the name given to the ring by the RSHA or by those involved was never clear). He was told that Von Scheliha received from the ring a sum of 1,000 marks a month i.e. more than his regular Foreign Office salary of 800 marks a month.

7. The ring was built around a man who came from Russia by parachute and, so informant believes, must have been captured with Von Scheliha's name on his person. This man was the son of a well known German Communist. His name resembled "Koenen". Informant does not know if he arrived with a radio sender or not.

8. One way the RSHA used to find out details of the plot was to put the two women arrested, Frll Stobe and Frau Hannecken, into the same cell with a stool-pigeon. This detail came to informant from the minister who visited Von Scheliha in jail two hours before his execution. (The name of this minister is not known. It may have been Pastor Buchholz, of Berlin: or Buchholz may know who it was).

9. Von Scheliha was executed by strangulation on the 22 December 1942. Over 100 people are believed by informant to have been executed in connection with the Rote Kapelle affair. No announcement of their trial or execution was ever made by the authorities.

10. It is noteworthy that members of the ring came from all political parties. Von Scheliha himself belonged to the German National party. The first lieutenant in the Air Ministry was a Communist. It is believed by informant that those in the plot were working for the overthrow of Hitler and were accepting help from Russia for this purpose, but that the Russians probably regarded them as of more value as an espionage ring.

#### SUGGESTED ACTION:

To obtain complete details of the plot, it is believed important to find:

A. Generalrichter von der Luftwaffe Roeder, formerly of Kantenerstr. 3, Berlin-Wilmersdorf. Roeder may be at present at his family estate in the neighborhood of Luneburg, province of Hanover: or with his wife's closest friend, a princess (name unknown) in Westphalia. He has a brother, Kapitän zur See Roeder, who lives at Eisenbahnstr 4, Berlin. A check by an SCI contact shows that the brother is not at home and that nothing is known there of his whereabouts or of Generalrichter Roeder's. Since Roeder was in

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charge of prosecution of the military members of the ring (and was promoted for his handling of it) he undoubtedly could supply information in great detail.

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B. Generalrichter von der Luftwaffe Koepsch, chief of Roeder at the time of the Rote Kapelle investigation. Koepsch is believed to be in Halberstadt: his wife, who left separately from Berlin, went to a farm near Hanover with members of the Croatian Air Force liaison mission.

It is known that Koepsch possesses considerable knowledge of the Rote Kapelle organization.

*L.E. de Neufville*  
L. E. de NEUFVILLE  
Civilian      SCI  
Commanding

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